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ABSTRACT

A policy forum featured a presentation by Linda Chavez on the public policy needs of the Puerto Rican community. The forum also included a panel of experts from the Puerto Rican community to provide critical feedback on Chavez's presentation. Chavez argued that Hispanic Americans can move into the mainstream of United States society, and that public policies ought to encourage assimilation, rather than encouraging Hispanic Americans to remain in ethnic enclaves divided from the rest of the nation. Puerto Ricans have been regarded as an exception to other Hispanic American groups because they have citizenship and do not face the problems of undocumented immigration experienced by other Hispanic American communities. A significant issue in the discussion of public policy concerns of Hispanic Americans has been the proper role of bilingual education. Panel members responded to the presentation and to Chavez's book "Out of the Barrio: Toward a New Politics of Hispanic Assimilation," expressing differing views about the appropriate public policies to address issues of family stability and poverty, ethnic separatism, and bilingual education. Panelists were Aida Rodriguez, Edwin Melendez, and Cesar Perales. A rejoinder by L. Chavez and a discussion by panel participants and audience members concluded the forum. (SLD)

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